GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5174
ANSWERED ON:30.04.2008
INCIDENTS OF FIRE IN ABANDONED MINES
Singh Shri Uday

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent coal fires in the illegal pits of abandoned mines has spread from Asansol to Nimcha Coalfields;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government proposes to take effective steps to check the further spread of coal fire in the region; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA)

(a) & (b): Due to illegal mining a fire had occurred at JK Nagar fire project (near Nimcha Village) under Satgram Area, Raniganj-Asansol coal belt in West Bengal on 4/1/2008 and the fire was dealt with suitably by Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL) and State Authorities. Smoke was seen coming out from a pothole in the south side of Nimcha village and the pothole was filled immediately with mutti/ soil and compacted. Subsequently, on 26/3/2008, when an underground gallery was opened during illegal mining, the smoke/fire was observed again. This illegal underground gallery was driven by miscreants from high wall side of coal edge which was filled earlier with mutti/soil. The affected areas were immediately filled up by mutti/soil and compacted to prevent the access of air. At present no fire/smoke is reported from these areas.

The Nigha Seam (R-VIII) is the top most seam occurring near and around Nimcha Village at a depth of 20-22 metres which was mined unscientifically by the erstwhile owners through underground mining and was abounded prior to nationalisation. Due to shallow depth illegal pits were opened by miscreants for illegal mining of coal leading to spontaneous heating/fire which was detected in late seventies.

(c) & (d): Attempt to tackle this fire was started in a systematic manner by ECL through J.K. Nagar Fire Project taken up in 1983. Potholes and incline openings around Nimcha village were filled up by mutti/soil and compacted by dozer and other heavy earth moving machinery. In the year 1991, ECL approved a scheme for cutting of trench on south side of Nimcha village to isolate it from fire. The work of trench cutting is in progress. Central Institute of Mining & Fuel Research (CIMFR), Dhanbad, has also been engaged for scientific investigation for ascertaining the extent of fire towards Nimcha village for taking further course of action.